

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

THE CROFT,
BETLEY, *via* CREWE,
Jan. 5, 1902.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I have received with much pleasure the copies of Meredith's works sent to me as a token of your goodwill. They will be most delightful friends in my new home, and I shall always feel grateful to you for giving them to me.

It was with much grief that I parted from all at Scale How, but I hope to see many of you again this summer.

We like this place immensely. The house and surroundings are delightful, and the quiet is most refreshing.

With very kind regards,

Believe me your sincere friend,
M. L. HODGSON.

DEAR EDITOR,

As a lasting evidence of the gratitude, which doubtless most of the Members of the Students' Association feel, for the training and help gained at The House of Education, it has been suggested to start a Scholarship Fund.

This Fund should provide the Two Years' Training for those who are suitable candidates, but who, through adverse circumstances, are unable to pay the fees.

Will you kindly open a correspondence upon the subject in the Magazine, so as to learn the opinion of the Members?

The sum of £1500 would be required as capital. Suggestions as to the working of the scheme will be most gratefully welcomed.

Yours very truly,
JANE W. DEVONSHIRE.

DEAR FRIENDS,

We are most grateful to you all for the many letters and messages we have received, wishing us success in our new work. As soon as we have settled down and can form some idea of what we have undertaken you shall have an account of it.

One of our many plans is, that we will have an Ambleside Students' Week during the summer holidays. There will be educational, social, and personal discussions held in the orchard, and excursions to places of interest in the neighbourhood will be arranged. The evenings will be devoted to entertainments in the usual House of Education style. We suggest that subjects for discussion, and offers to read papers on either of the proposed subjects, be sent to us at The Croft, Betley, *via* Crewe, as early as possible in 1902.

We shall be able to put up about thirty Students in the house. We propose to charge each Student fifteen shillings for the week, to cover expenses. Names of Students wishing to take advantage of this opportunity of meeting to enjoy the society of old friends, and the chance of making new ones, should be sent to us not later than the first of June, 1902.

In order that we may decide the date of the meeting, we should be much obliged if all those who would like to come will send us a post card saying which week will be most convenient for them in August or September.

Again thanking you all,

We remain your sincere friends,

M. L. HODGSON and
J. W. DEVONSHIRE.

MAISONETTE,
WOODVILLE ROAD,
BLACKHEATH, S.E.

DEAR EDITOR,

Miss Mason hopes that the Botanical Garden at Scale How will be a source of interest to old students and not only to those who were so fortunate as to be in residence at the time of Mr. Tuckwell's visit; and she suggests that old students may like to have their share in the garden by sending roots

which are more common in their neighbourhood than at Ambleside.

Will you make it known through the Magazine that I shall be glad if those who know plants peculiar to their district or locally common will communicate with me at Scale How and I will let them know whether the plants they offer are required according to Mr. Tuckwell's catalogue.

Yours sincerely,

AGNES C. DRURY
(Head Gardener).

THE STUDENTS' LETTER.

SCALE How,
AMBLESIDE,
March 6th, 1902.

DEAR EDITOR,

We are glad to tell you that this year has opened for us under very favourable auspices. We now muster the record number of thirty-two, the Seniors rejoice that they have the advantage in numbers as the Juniors certainly have it in height. (What will our pigmy Seniors think!) Although we miss our old friends, we welcomed two new members of the staff; Miss Barnett, one of the first students of the House of Education, has taken Miss Hodgson's place and lives in the house, and Miss Finch has filled Miss Adie's post.

Early in the term Mr. Sharp gave us a long promised lecture on birds, graphically illustrated by lime-light views from photographs of his own, many of which, besides being interesting, were very amusing, notably the courtship of the cole tit.

You are all familiar with the sight of students diving suddenly into ditches and hedges and staring excitedly at an apparently bare stone wall, or prowling along hedges and walls in a most suspicious way, or looking intently into spaces — we are out for a "bird walk" with Miss Kitching. With apologies we must mention the weather, which has quite

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surpassed in splendour this last month. Walks and colds retired gracefully before the superior charms of tobogganning and it is reported that the acclamations of delight or horror were heard on the other side of Loughrigg. For a walk we had been no ice for several years from the abject helplessness of those who boasted skates. Patches of students might be seen struggling and curling up like a flock of water-beetles on dry land. Miss Mason has annexed the kitchen garden and greenhouses. The latter we find most useful for rearing seeds for the Botanical Gardens, which, through the agency of wind, snow, and occasionally sheep, now presents a dishevelled appearance. However, the labels are beginning to assume the perpendicular again. The head gardener intends to let the old students know what plants we still need which grow near their localities, and hopes they will procure them by fair means or foul. Any contributions to the Museum will also be very gladly welcomed. For a week we had the pleasure of entertaining Miss Armfield, Miss Russell's successor, who took a keen and practical interest in our occupations, especially the handicrafts. It is to be regretted that Mr. Jackson has left Ambleside; his place has been taken by a Mr. Cock.

At the half-term, some of us went on an expedition to Keswick, others favoured Hawkshead and Troutbeck. We set out in a cloud of mist with the comforting assurance from those left behind, that the coach was liable to vanish into Thirlmere on such occasions. No such tragedy however occurred and we spent a very jolly day. We regret to say that Miss Mason has not been able to be with us much this term, and on that account we have had few literary evenings. Miss Lees gave us a charming introduction to Tom Brown, the Manx Poet, and we advise those who have not done so to make his acquaintance. After a long period of undiluted Shakespeare, we experienced a pleasant change in reading *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Rivals*, which perhaps made us enjoy *The Tempest* more than we should have done. We are looking forward next week to an evening with Mendelssohn, which Miss Drury is arranging for us. Miss Barnett is indefatigable in her efforts to bring forth our latent vocal powers, by some called "singing lessons," by others, "voice production," and by others, alas! "howling." The

Juniors being specially gifted with musical talent, and Scale How re-echoes from morning till night with melodious strains or the reverse. Our physical foes, in the shape of chilblains and vaccination have assaulted us with terrible vigour. There have been no fatalities from these causes, the inconvenience was felt chiefly by the Sergeant when three students and no musician presented themselves for drill. Could some one inform us if the S.K. board is in league with the P.N.E.U. authorities to prevent an incursion of students to London in May, for again, whilst we are groaning under Botany and Hygiene, and trying to cut our fingers off with Sloyd knives, you will be indulging in lectures, conversaziones, and, above all, Scale How Gossip.

With apologies for the hastiness of this epistle

From the

PRESENT STUDENTS.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AMONG CHILDREN

(BEING AN ACCOUNT OF A MONTH SPENT AS A HOLIDAY MOTHER AT ONE OF DR. BARNARDO'S COTTAGE HOMES).

JUST beyond the long shadows of London in the county of Essex lies the little village whither led my way on a cold evening of last December. A village without streets, or shops, yet with over a thousand inhabitants; a village echoing the sounds of many childish voices but which registers no births, a little community whose members are bound by ties of love and interdependence to one another, yet where few remember their fathers' voices or the touch of their mothers' hands upon their hair.

Then, as the people on the London platform struggled for their places in the overcrowded train, and later when with whistlings and shoutings the mighty engine carried us past innumerable factory chimneys, looking out upon these, I longed for the sight of the country that lay beyond and for the coming of the green fields.

And I wondered in my heart how many little children had been borne along this road towards those fields which they were soon to know but never yet had known. Children who had themselves been gathered up even as men gather treasures that others have despised from the ash heaps of the factories and the waste products of the workshops.

Cast forth by the great city, because (poor little waifs!) they, knowing nothing of the mighty laws of competition, and the stern mandate that only the fittest must survive, were themselves the very embodiment of the breach of the unalterable laws of political economy. For they were part of a surplus supply meeting no existent demand but demanding, even as the very breath of their life, stores of love and tenderness, and pity for their childish helplessness of which the city has no supplies for such as they.

Oh little waifs! Who can pause in the promoting of companies to create for you a family? Who can stay in the press of legislative business to teach you the law of love? Who can stoop from the contemplation of art and beauty to raise you up and show you the good things that have been prepared for you also?

"Oh, little feet! that such long years
Must wander on through hopes and fears;
Must ache and bleed beneath your load;
I, nearer to the Wayside Inn
Where toil shall cease and rest begin,
Am weary, thinking of your road."

But the train snorts and stops with a jerk, and soon the three mile drive is over and I stand before the great gates, within which, perhaps, I shall learn some answer to the pitiful problem of the children. The gateway leads into the "village," I can see the green grass plots and the dove-cote in the centre. I can make out two or three large buildings and many cottages, but I see all through a veil for already the tall spire of the red-roofed village church is pointing to a dark sky sequined with many stars.

But even in the gathering darkness the village looks peaceful and homelike. It is "home" in the real sense, not merely a home for over a thousand girls, all of whom have been at some time in their short lives absolutely destitute, having the workhouse before them at the best and at the worst such misery that to think of it makes a numb pain at the heart.